

Newsletter

OF THE AMERICAN RESEARCH CENTER IN EGYPT



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Editorial Assistant: Monique Bell
c/o ARCE
New York University
50 Washington Square South
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Cover Illustration: Relief Head of a Deity. Granite. Ptolemaic Period, temp. Ptolemy II-III, 284-222 B.C. H. 24.8 cm. (9 3/4"). From the Harer Family Trust Collection. Pieces from this collection are on view at University Art Gallery, California State University, San Bernardino, January 8 - March 1, 1992.

THE COMBINED PREHISTORIC EXPEDITION: RESULTS OF THE 1990 AND 1991 SEASONS

FRED WENDORF¹, ANGELA E. CLOSE¹,
ROMUALD SCHILD² AND
KRYSTYNA WASYLIKOWA³

Introduction

Since 1962, a group of American, European and Egyptian scholars, known as the Combined Prehistoric Expedition, has been doing cooperative research on the prehistory of Egypt. The group is sponsored by Southern Methodist University and the Institute for the History of Material Culture of the Polish Academy of Sciences, and it receives most of its financial support from the United States National Science Foundation.

Between 1962 and 1966, the work of the Expedition was focused in the area to be inundated by the reservoir behind the New High Dam at Aswan. The Nile Valley has remained an important area of research since then, but even in the early years, some research was done on the prehistoric materials in the Egyptian Sahara (Hester and Hoebler 1969), and since 1972 most of the work by the Expedition has been in the desert (except for the five

years, 1978 and 1981-1984, devoted to Wadi Kubbaniya near Aswan).

The Eastern Sahara is one of the driest places on earth; it receives virtually no rainfall, there are no people, and, except in the vicinity of a few widely scattered places where water can be found by digging a shallow well, there is no vegetation and almost no life. At several times in the past, however, it was a very different environment. We know that there were at least six wet periods with permanent lakes, separated by hyper-arid intervals, during the Early and Middle Paleolithic, between ca. 350,000 and 70,000 years ago. There was a major period of aridity between 70,000 and 11,000 years ago, coinciding with the cold dry period of the Last Glacial in Europe. With the beginning of the early Holocene, moist conditions returned and continued until around 5000 years ago, when the

present cycle of aridity began. It is this last interval, the early Holocene, that has been the focus of our work during 1990 and 1991.

The sequence of Holocene events in the Eastern Sahara is given below.

Age BP	Environment	Archaeology
4600	-----	-----
	Playa III	Late Neolithic

		Middle Neolithic
7700	-----	-----
	Aridity	
7900	-----	-----
	Playa II	Early Neolithic el-Nabta type
8100	-----	-----
	Aridity	
8200	-----	-----
		el-Ghorab type
	Playa I	el-Kortein type?
		el-Adam type
11,000	-----??-----	

The Early and Middle Neolithic are of particular interest because earlier research by the Expedition has suggested that during the early Holocene, the Eastern Sahara was a center of cultural development which may have contributed significantly to the onset of the Predynastic in the Nile Valley. Some of these results have been controversial, and our major goal in 1990 was the reevaluation of the supporting data.

Previous research in the Eastern Sahara had indicated the presence of domestic cattle (Gautier 1984: 68-72; 1987: 176-180) and pottery (Wendorf and Schild 1984: 410) before 9000 BP; of domestic caprovid by 6400 BP and perhaps by 7000 BP (Gautier 1980: 332-333); of domestic barley by 8100 BP (el Hadidi 1980: 347, Fig. A5.2: c,d); and of domestic wheat by 7000 BP (el Hadidi 1980: 348, Fig. A5.2: a [where the inflorescence fragment is incorrectly identified as barley - see Stemler and Falk 1980: 393-397]). These dates meant that cattle were independently domesticated in Africa and that pottery was independently invented there. The domestic cereals and small livestock came in from southwestern Asia, but their Saharan dates place their appearance there earlier than anywhere else in Africa.

This research was completed before accelerator mass spectrometry dating, which permits the direct dating of very small samples, and the original finds were contaminated during analysis by modern carbon tracers, or by restoration with protein glues. In 1990, therefore, we returned to the Early Neolithic sites at Nabta and Bir Kiseiba to collect (if possible) additional samples of all these materials, which, after identification, would be dated directly.

As part of this effort, several previously tested sites, at Nabta Playa and in the area of Bir Kiseiba (Figure 1), were reexcavated, and one of these yielded a spectacular assemblage of edible plant remains with associated radio-

carbon dates between 8600 and 7400 BP. Other sites, dating as early as 9000 BP, have also yielded seeds and tubers. Our work in 1991 therefore concentrated upon the recovery of plants. These plant remains provide our first opportunity to examine the full spectrum of the prehistoric diet among early Saharan pastoralists, and may provide clues to the process which ultimately led to the domestication of such African crops as sorghum and millets.

Archaeological Results

The Early Cattle

Sites E-79-8 and E-80-4, at El Adam playa near Bir Kiseiba, have dates earlier than 9000 BP (Close 1984: 347; Connor 1984: 220), and have yielded bones identified as *Bos* (Gautier 1984: 59-62). When the sites were revisited in 1990, considerably more cultural material had been exposed by deflation in the last ten years, including many bones. The bones were primarily of hare and gazelle but a few were collected which are attributable to *Bos* (identifications by A. Gautier). A cattle-size bone (too large for gazelle or hartebeest) was recovered during the 1991 reexcavation of Site E-77-7, at El Beid playa; this site has been previously dated to 8960 BP \pm 110 years (SMU-440). Cattle bones were also recovered from the Early Neolithic site E-75-6, at Nabta playa, in contexts dated to about 8100 BP (Banks 1984: 121).

Three of the best preserved and securely identified cattle bones (a phalanx from E-79-8, a tooth from E-80-4 and a distal metapodial from E-75-6) were submitted to Dr. Tom Stafford, of the Institute of Arctic and Alpine Research, University of Colorado at Boulder, for measurement of CHN (carbon-hydrogen-nitrogen) and amino acid contents, prior to accelerator dating. However, the bones all had either $<0.1\%$ N, non-collagenous amino acid compositions, or both, and were therefore not acceptable for ^{14}C dating by any method (T. Stafford, *in litt.* 17 Dec 1990; Stafford *et al.* 1990: 114-117). We are thus, unfortunately, not able to prove the association of the *Bos* bones with these early sites. However, in light of our ability to find this association repeatedly, we are convinced of its validity.

The Early Caprovids

Site E-75-8 is an enormous and deeply stratified Middle and Late Neolithic site at Nabta Playa; we think it was a place where small groups, who usually lived some distance from Nabta, came together during the rainy season. An area of 30 m², on the western edge of the 1977 excavation, was dug to a depth of 1.8 m, through the Neolithic sequence already known from the site. A Late Neolithic hearth has been dated to 6430 BP \pm 75 years (SMU-2504), which agrees with other dates available for the later part of the sequence. A Middle Neolithic hearth near the base of the sequence, which originally gave an aberrant date of almost 15,000 years (SMU-436), was resampled and is now dated to 6870 BP \pm 190 years (SMU-2505).

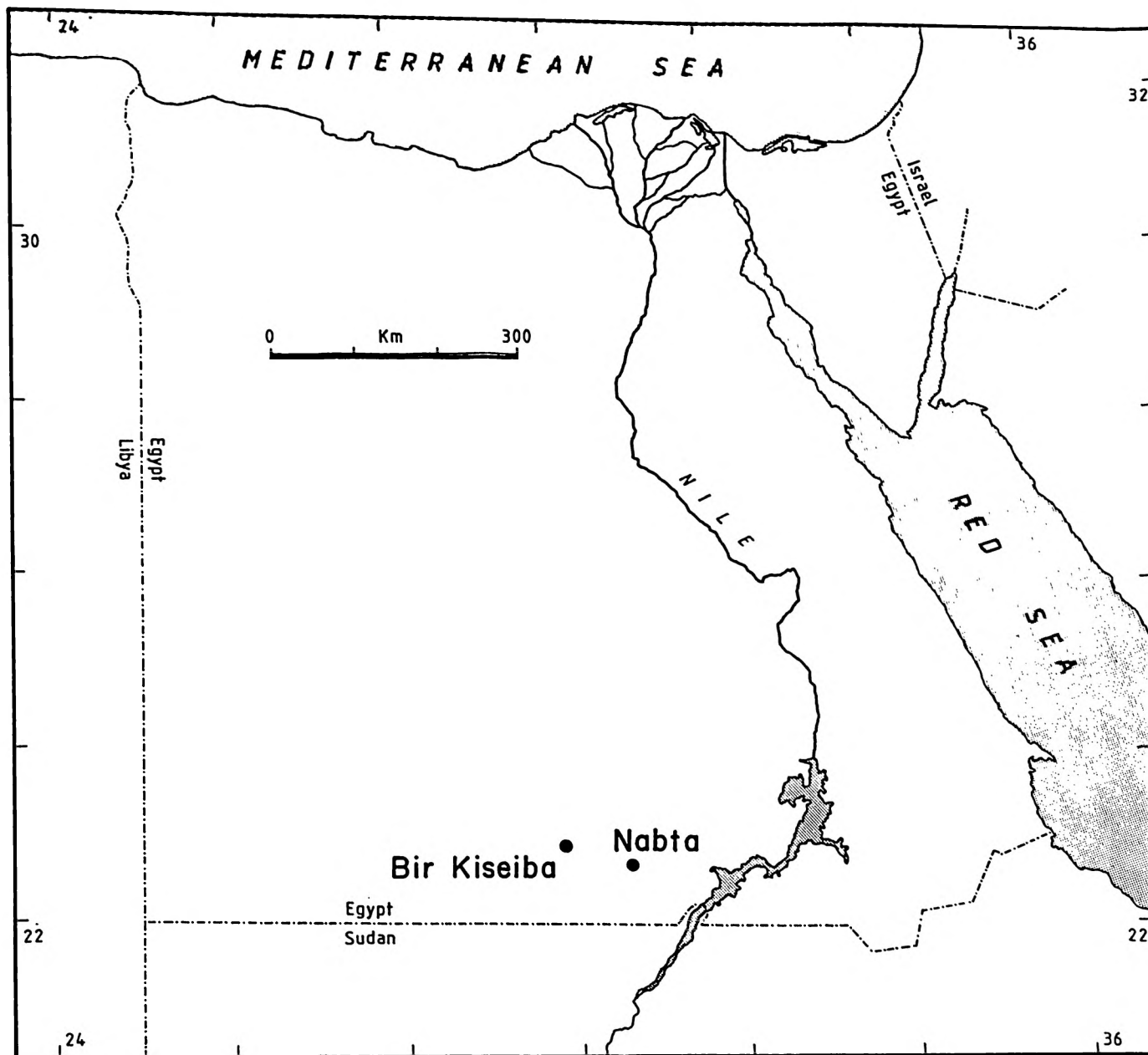


Fig. 1: Map of Egypt showing the locations of Nabta and Bir Kiseiba.

Several bones identified as caprovind (and therefore domestic sheep/goat) were recovered from both the Middle and Late Neolithic layers in good stratigraphic context (there were no traces of pits). An incisor and a molar from near the base of the Middle Neolithic were submitted for dating, but, as with the cattle bones, proved to be undatable. This seems, in fact, to be a characteristic of bones from desert sites: bones from arid Near Eastern prehistoric sites have little or no collagen preserved (Weiner and Bar-Yosef 1990). Stratigraphically, the age of the Nabta caprovinds is almost 7000 BP, and their identification has been reconfirmed by additional study (A. Gautier, *in litt.* 12 Nov 1990)

The Early Pottery

In 1990, several recently exposed potsherds were also collected at E- 79-8 and E-80-4, including the previously

known mica-tempered ware (Close 1984: 346; Connor 1984: 239-244), and a large sherd of a different ware, which was horizontally embedded in the sediments (and, therefore, had not fallen down a crack). This last sherd has a complex comb-impressed design on the outside, which is encrusted with ashy material; we had hoped to date the ashy material directly but it proved to be insufficient even for AMS dating (R.E.M. Hedges, pers. comm.). However, reexcavation of E-77-7 in 1991 yielded a sherd buried immediately adjacent to a burned twig; the charcoal has been submitted to the SMU laboratory for dating and should provide an age for the associated potsherd. This sample is now being processed, but the results are not yet known.

The Problem of Cereals

In 1977, domestic barley was found in samples taken

by the botanist, Dr. Nabil el Hadidi, from an Early Neolithic pit at E-75-6, and from a hearth and within bulk samples from the Middle Neolithic horizons at E-75-8 (el Hadidi 1980: 347); the Middle Neolithic samples from E-75-8 also yielded domestic emmer wheat (el Hadidi 1980: 348). All of these specimens were contaminated by modern carbon tracers during scanning electron micrography, and the two sites were therefore reexcavated in 1990 to recover additional specimens.

All of the excavated deposits from E-75-8 (see above) were screened, the charcoal was collected and examined in the field-laboratory by a paleobotanist (K. W.). Several unscreened bulk samples were also examined, including at least one from every hearth and three large samples (totaling about 75 kg) from the precise locations of the 1977 bulk samples. No identifiable plant-remains were found except wood- charcoal.

In 1990 at E-75-6, the overlying playa clays were removed from an area of 90 m² just east of the 1975 and 1977 excavations. This revealed several houses and pits, which are remarkably rich in botanical remains. All the screened deposits and numerous unscreened bulk samples were examined in the field (by K. W.), including material from the pit sampled in 1977; no barley was found.

We have thus been unable to confirm the presence of domestic wheat or barley at E-75-8, or of barley at E-75-6, despite the abundance of plant- remains. We therefore conclude that the cereals were not in true archaeological association with the sites.

Early Neolithic Food Economy in the Sahara

Early Neolithic groups in the Eastern Sahara were cattle-pastoralists, who appear to have followed the modern African mode of pastoralism in using their animals as living sources of protein (milk and blood), rather than slaughtering them for meat (Wendorf *et al.* 1987, 1990). Meat was obtained primarily from gazelles and hares, which were presumably hunted. Grinding-stones occur even in the earliest Neolithic sites (Close 1984: 346; Connor 1984: 239), suggesting the use of plant-foods, but plant- remains, except wood-charcoal, are almost never recovered. However, reexcavation in 1990 and 1991 of Site E-75-6 at Nabta revealed an astonishing assemblage of remains of plant-foods that is unparalleled in sites of this age in Africa and has few equals anywhere else in the world. These were found in houses of three major periods of occupation, dated to 8600-8500, 8100-7900, and 7600-7400 BP. Rare plant-remains were also recovered from Site E-77-7 at el-Gabal el-Beid Playa, dated at 8960 BP, and at a new locality in Nabta Playa, Site E-91-1, with major occupations at *ca.* 8500-8200 and 7600-7400 BP.

Site E-75-6 was discovered in 1974 and was partially excavated in 1974, 1975 and 1977 (Banks 1984: 61-129). Almost 1000 m² were excavated, revealing cultural deposits of two different types of Early Neolithic but without reaching the southern and southeastern boundaries of the site. The lower layer was assigned to the Early Neolithic of el-Kortein type, dating to about 8800-8500 BP. The upper

horizon, which was originally thought to represent a single phase of occupation, is Early Neolithic of el-Nabta type, dating to about 8100 BP, and showed a patterned arrangement of two rows of features, including the basin-floors of huts, hearths, storage-pits and walk-in wells (Figure 2). This laid-out village was seen as one of the first indications of developing social control within these societies (Wendorf and Schild 1980: 269; Wendorf *et al.* 1990: 445).

Site E-75-6 was reexcavated in 1990. The area opened was southeast of the earlier areas (in the direction of the two lines of features) and sealed beneath playa clays, as the 1970s areas had not been (Figure 2). Removal of the seal of playa-clays uncovered the outlines of four houses, two oval and two round, and twelve pits within a 10 x 15 m area; only two quadrants of each house have been excavated. The two oval houses are large (8.3 x 4.5 m and 7 x 2.5 m), shallow basins; they have radiocarbon dates on charcoal of 7770 BP \pm 110 years (Gd-6257), 8550 BP \pm 130 years (Gd- 6254) and 8600 BP \pm 140 years (Gd-4587). The floor of one of them had traces of six hearths (<1 m² in area) and, separate from them, at least 74 small hemispherical depressions, or cooking-holes, usually 10-20 cm in diameter (Figure 3). The excavated portion of the other oval house had four hearths and 18 hemispherical depressions. The shallow, circular houses are about 4 m in diameter, and one is dated 7920 BP \pm 100 years (Gd-6258). One of them had three hearths and seven cooking-holes plus an irregular bell-shaped storage pit, while the other had a single hearth and 28 cooking-holes.

In all the houses, a burned, ashy sediment had been piled up around some of the cooking-holes while they held containers, and this sediment was particularly rich in plant-remains. This suggests that containers of food were placed in the cooking-holes and that hot ash (the brown sediment) was piled up around them to cook the contents, which sometimes boiled over or fell into the ash, leading to their carbonization and preservation. That the plant-remains are carbonized, rather than reduced to ash, suggests that they were cooked in hot ashes, rather than over an open fire (cf. Hillman *et al.* 1989: 206); the actual hearths may, therefore, not have been used directly for cooking plant-foods.

Thus far, only the material recovered in 1990 has received more than preliminary sorting and the types identified are listed in Table 1; the overall composition of the 1991 collection is very similar. Both collections are dominated by *Zizyphus* stones, grass grains, leguminous plant-seeds and probably seeds of the mustard and caper families; the unidentified material consists of many examples of a few types.

Ecological interpretation of this material is not yet firm, since several genera have not yet been identified and there are no identifications to the species level, but some observations can be made. There are no fruits or seeds of aquatic plants *sensu stricto* (although some of the tubers may be from such plants). The *Scirpus/Schoenoplectus* and *Cyperus/Fuirena* types could have grown in a reedswamp or sedge-belt at the playa's edge; *Panicum* (if it is *P.*

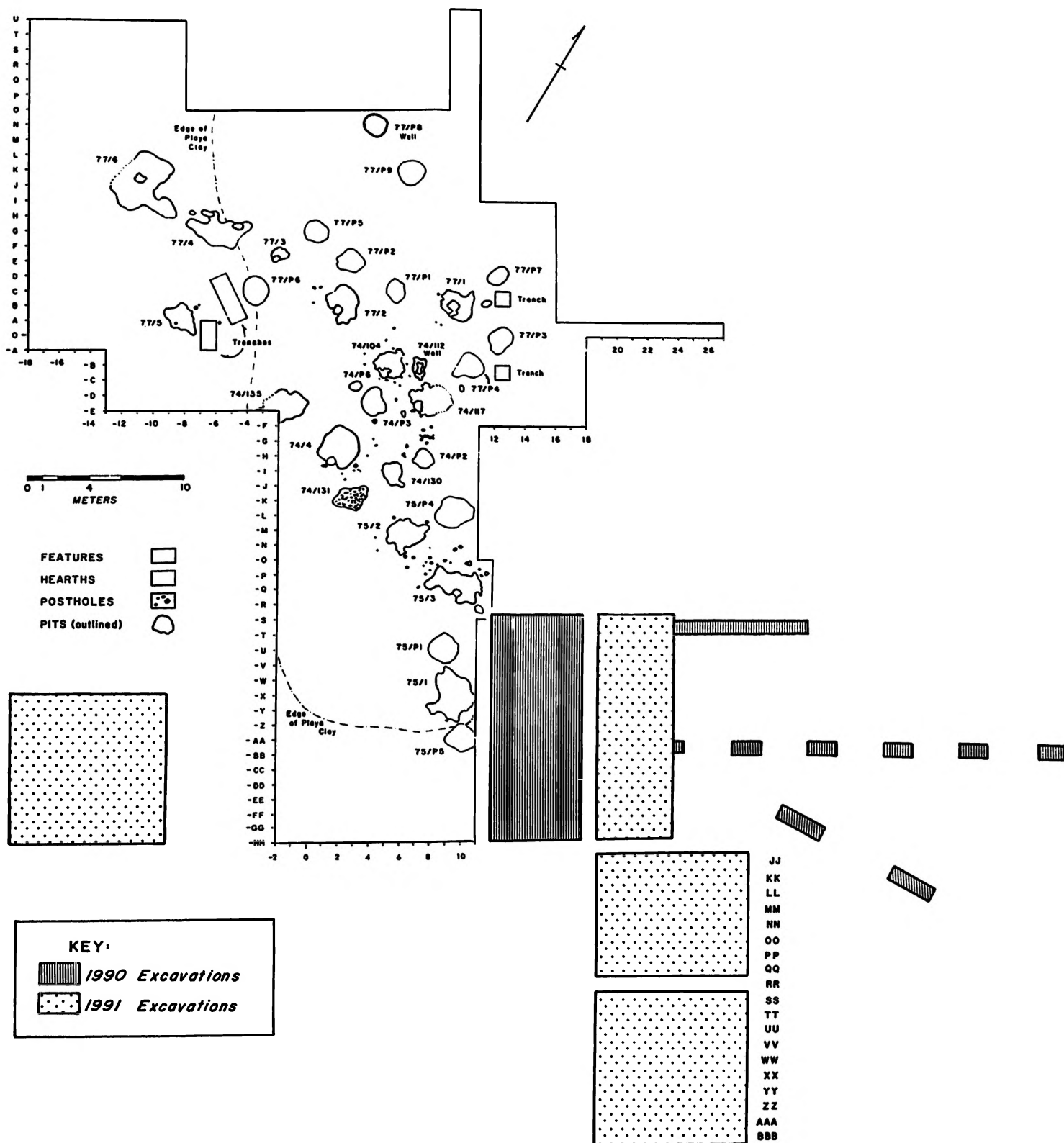


Fig. 2: Plan of Site E-75-6 at Nabta, showing the relative positions of the 1977 (unshaded), 1990 and 1991 areas of excavation.

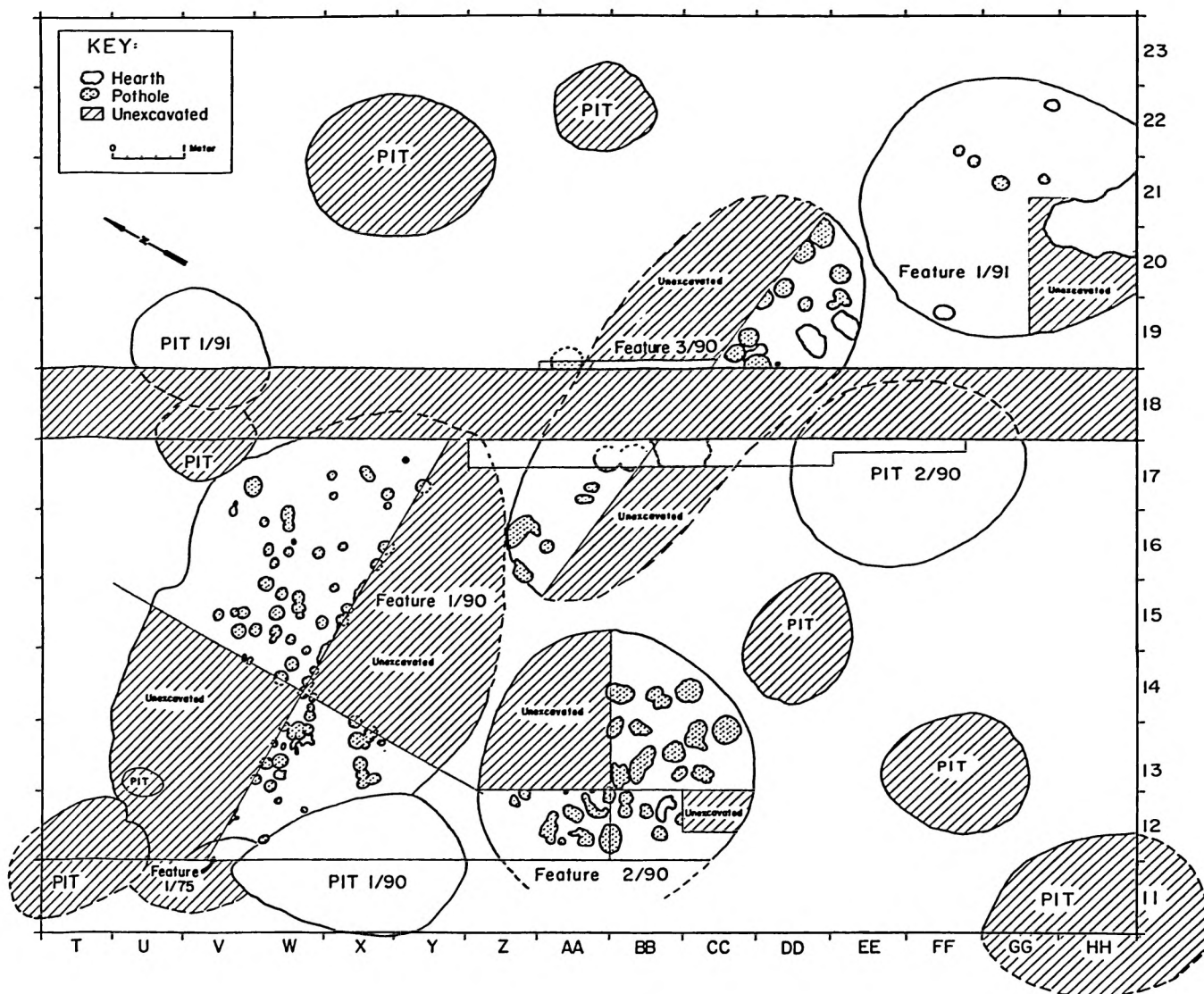


Fig. 3: Site E-75-6 (Nabta): detailed plan of the areas excavated in 1990 and 1991, showing outlines of house-floors (features) with hearths and cooking-holes (potholes).

repens) and *Echinochloa* also would grow on the damp shore, and the tubers are likely to be derived from a similar environment. The absence of true aquatics and the rarity of sedges suggest that most plants at the site came from drier habitats.

Only one tree, *Zizyphus* sp., is definitely present in the macrofossils, although *Capparis* is possible, while *Tamarix* and several species of *Acacia* have been identified among the wood-charcoal (H. Barakat, pers. comm.). *Zizyphus* is a Sahelo-Saharan element, but also grows in the desert zone (Ritchie 1987). The abundance of its fruits suggests that the trees were easily accessible to the inhabitants of E-75-6.

Several grasses were apparently collected, as they are today by Saharan nomads (Harlan 1989a, 1989b), indicating the antiquity of this practice. These included *Sorghum* and the smaller-grained grasses resembling *Panicum*, *Digitaria*, *Brachiaria*, *Urochloa*, *Echinochloa* and *Setaria*. Several species of Leguminosae were also collected for seeds, and probably for tubers as well.

The abundance and diversity of plant-remains indicate that the local vegetation was rich in species and, in some seasons, relatively luxuriant. Sedges and some grasses favouring wet habitats grew around the playa, a contracted vegetation with *Zizyphus* trees and perennial grasses grew where surface or ground-water was available for most of the year, while annual grasses were relatively luxuriant after the summer rains.

All the plants represented are members of the natural sub-desertic or sahelian flora. Thus far, the sorghums and millets seem to be morphologically wild and would thus be simply parts of an economy based upon gathering wild plant-foods. However, very preliminary investigation by infrared spectroscopy of the lipids in the sorghum grains suggests the possibility of some cultivation (Wasylikowa *et al.* in press). Considerably more work will be required to investigate this possibility, but it is particularly intriguing since it has been suggested that sorghum and millet were first cultivated in Ethiopia or in the savannah region (Doggett 1976; Harlan 1975); the northward extension of

the monsoon zone in the early Holocene also makes southwestern Egypt a possibility. Nabta is thus of the utmost importance for the information it can provide on grain types (and, thus, sorghum races) within this crucial area.

There is very marked patterning in the association of different plant-varieties with different cooking-holes. Some cooking-holes yielded predominantly Leguminosae (sometimes one taxon, sometimes several taxa); some yielded Gramineae (including sorghums and millets); some Cruciferae, Cucurbitaceae, Cyperaceae or Boraginaceae (*Arnebia*); some *Zizyphus* fruits; and some yielded mixtures in differing proportions.

The different plant-assemblages from each cooking-hole reflect different cooking events and thus the composition of different meals, or groups of meals, depending how many times each cooking-hole was used. There are so many cooking-holes and the differences in plant-assemblages are so marked, that each hole is not likely to have been used many times. We therefore have the potential to recover assemblages created within extremely fine intervals of time - weeks, or even days. This not only will permit a finely-grained resolution of the local environment, but, perhaps more importantly, we will be able to see in detail how Neolithic plant-gatherers preferred to exploit that environment. Given a sufficiently large set of plant-assemblages, we may be able to determine not simply what was available at what season, but what was chosen out of the available plant-foods and how and in what proportions they were combined. This could reflect, in turn, both the aesthetics of taste and the effort expended, or success enjoyed, in using particular microniches within and around the playa basin.

Further, if we may assume that individuals did not change residence from house to house within an episode of occupation, then these latter aspects of preference, which are primarily culturally determined, may well also be examined between houses. We would thus be able to identify range of variation both at the village level and at the level of the residential unit. Comparison of the total floral samples recovered from each feature or house suggests that while there is considerable variation within each house (and, thus, between meals?), overall the same plants were collected in similar relative frequencies during the three periods of occupation.

Undoubtedly, a great deal more information on the food economy during the Early Neolithic in the Eastern Sahara will be available when the plant remains have been fully studied. In the meantime, we plan to continue the excavations at Site E-75-6, and several other Early Neolithic sites in that area in hopes that we can learn more about the Neolithic food economy as it functioned in the Sahara.

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	No. of samples where taxon occurs
<u>Trees</u>	
<i>Zizyphus</i> sp.	51
<u>Grasses</u>	
sub-family Panicoideae, tribe Paniceae	
<i>Echinochloa</i> type	18
<i>Digitaria</i> type	3
<i>Urochloa/Brachiaria</i> type	5
<i>Panicum</i> type	21
<i>Setaria</i> type	12
sub-family Panicoideae, tribe Andropogoneae	
<i>Sorghum</i> sp.	30
<u>Other herbs or shrublets</u>	
<i>Cyperus/Fuirena</i> type	5
<i>Scirpus/Schoenoplectus</i> type	5
<i>Rumex</i> type	1
<i>Cucurbitaceae</i>	23
<i>Arnebia</i> type	25
<u>Unidentified</u>	
<i>Leguminosae</i> , several types	frequent
<i>Cruciferae</i> ?, one type	frequent
<i>Chenopodiaceae</i> ?	2
<i>Malvaceae</i> ?	1
<i>Capparidaceae</i> ?	frequent
Tubers (unidentified parenchymatous tissues)	
Several unidentified fruits and seeds	

Table 1. Plant taxa identified in the 1990 collections from E-75-6

PUBLIC CULTURE IN CONTEMPORARY EGYPT

LILA ABU-LUGHOD

Editor's Note: Dr. Abu-Lughod was an ARCE Fellow 1989-90, during which time she obtained material for this report. She is currently teaching anthropology at New York University.

I spent nine months from October to July 1989-90 as an ARCE fellow working on a research project whose goal was a better understanding of key cultural debates about family, national identity, and class distinction in contemporary Egyptian society. I sought to explore through an ethnographic study the role of such cosmopolitan forms as television serials in shaping these debates.

Although I began with an interest in the broad range of phenomena that can be called "public culture"--cinema, sports, and the various forms of mass media--I decided to focus on the genre of television serials (the *musalsalat*) because of their enormous popularity and influence. This was a radical departure from my previous work on social and cultural life among the Awlad 'Ali Bedouins. Why the shift from a small and somewhat obscure Bedouin community on the fringes of Egyptian life to an urban-based cultural form that reaches a complex variety of communities in the nation? Why the shift from "traditional" oral poetry and storytelling to the "modern" forms of mass media? Two issues in the politics of scholarship--one concerning anthropology and the other Middle East Studies--inspired this shift.

Anthropology has come under increasing criticism, from within and outside the discipline, for its overconcern with non-Western communities and its tendency, in the scholarly division of labor, to work the fields of "traditional" rather than "modern" communities, even as we become more aware of the way traditions have been enforced from outside or invented from within. Middle East Studies has also come under attack, most persuasively by Edward Said in his critique of Orientalism for, among other things, perpetuating a particular image of the Orient as something utterly different from if not inferior to the West.

If these critiques are valid, they challenge us to consider carefully what sorts of research projects to undertake. Television, and particularly the melodramatic evening serials I call, for ease of reference, soap operas, presented themselves as a promising topic for someone working in Egypt. The extraordinary popularity of this genre is such that it can be said to set the very rhythms of national life. The advantages of the project for stretching anthropological theory were also obvious. First, it meant moving beyond the local community to the nation-state as the focus of work, with all the analytical and methodological challenges that presented. Second, it meant unsettling the

concept of culture as some sort of coherent and timeless force because one had to consider something professional that emanated from the capital and something that was received as only one element among many in people's cultural lives. Finally, it meant writing about the Arab world as "modern," as similar to rather than different from the West, as an equal participant in the field of cultural studies of such popular forms as television, film, and advertising where issues of media, ideology, politics and imagination are being raised.

There were several aspects to my research: analysis of the serials themselves, interviews with those involved in their production, a reading of the press, and informal discussions with ordinary Egyptians in a range of locales and of various social classes. Through these various means, I hoped to gain insight into three crucial dimensions of this form of mass culture: the processes by which it is produced, the social and political messages it conveys, and the way these messages may be differentially received by various segments of the population.

Preliminary Analysis

Since an anthropological study of forms such as the television serials must take account of three elements--the producers, the texts and the consumers--the preliminary findings of my research are organized around these three topics.

Producers

From my encounters with those responsible for the production of television dramas, it is clear that whatever their motives in terms of producing successful entertainment and advancing their careers, they share a common discourse of production that is a somewhat patronizing discourse of guidance, education, and culturing of the Egyptian masses. The director of the newly independent production sector responsible for all television dramas and films sees Egypt as a developing nation concerned with the cultural education of the people. He sees the goal of good television as the education of the citizen and the inculcation of patriotism, morality, religion, courage and enterprise. Similarly, one of Egypt's most gifted directors sees those involved in television as having a national responsibility to eradicate cultural illiteracy. Both of these men, like others, recognize that television dramas, because they are so loved by the people, are the ideal medium through which to spread their messages. They recognize that programs must be enjoyable and thought-provoking at the same time.

There are interesting sociological questions to be

asked about these professionals and their discourse about soap operas. Who are they? Where do they fit in the class structure? Based in Cairo, their orientation and milieu is certainly urban. Sometimes cosmopolitan and travelled, they are at least educated. If only as employees of a state-run agency, they are tied in with the government. They seem to feel a national responsibility as some sort of cultural elite. How do their views articulate with those of their very varied audiences? These are the sorts of questions about producers that must be part of an anthropological study of public culture.

The "Texts"

The central aspect of the study of television serials must be their analysis as a set of "texts." What sort of world do the serials construct? What image of life do they present? Even more significant, what are the silences? What issues go unmentioned, what connections are not made? Although it is somewhat perilous to generalize about such a varied genre, I will simply describe some of the tentative conclusions to which I have come.

Stories selected for production as serials are subjected to evaluation for their artistic merit but they are also submitted to the censors. Given this, it is surprising how much "social criticism" is apparently included. Most serials do not come close to the level of the controversial serial "The White Flag," which opens provocatively with the words, "These events really happened and continue to happen today," but they do include dramatizations of the problems caused by the housing shortage, the familiar nightmares of bureaucratic red tape and the endless run-around people get when they try to get compensated for damage, collect retirement checks, or get government services, the problems of corrupt officials who can be bought off by wealthy or influential people, and generally the problem of ordinary people who do not have access.

What both viewers and producers say makes for a successful serial is that it should move people. To move people, according to the director of the production sector, "You need a story with powerful events and the problems that people are concerned with." The dominant aesthetic of the serial is thus what I call the aesthetic of *nakad*--a word difficult to translate into English that refers to a sadness or depression about the piling on of problems. Although there are religious serials in classical Arabic and also the occasional comedy, I think it is safe to say that most of the serials are melodramas where men and women cry, long sad looks with background music are common, and the characters must deal with problem after problem. Even those serials that are more than family dramas--those with larger political or historical messages--include tragedies and tears of family or family-like ties.

What is the pleasure in watching this sort of depressing fare? People seem moved by the sufferings of others perhaps worse off than themselves, people burdened with problems of marriages they want but cannot have, of marriages they want that turn out badly, of lack of housing, of the struggle to maintain their integrity and a decent life in

the face of hardships and temptations to corruption. Perhaps they sense from these that everyone has problems, that we are all in the same boat, that it could be worse.

How do the serials deal with these many problems they present? What sorts of solutions do they offer? I mentioned that one had to think about the silences of the texts as well as their contents and here is where the lines become clear. It seems to me that the only resolutions offered by most serials are moral ones, usually involving the reassertion of family values, ties between brothers, respect for the wishes and authority of the father, the continued nurturance of the mother. Everyday piety and faith in God are also positively presented, but no mention is ever made of political Islam. In other words, although they seem critical of the political or social system because they depict social problems, the serials actually end up reducing most issues to emotional or family problems and offer moral rather than political solutions. Furthermore, they suggest that there *are* solutions because things always work out in the last episode.

The most popular and serious of the serials shown in 1990 were not, however, family dramas. It might be thought that both of these, "Ra'fat al-Haggan" and "Layali Hilmiyya," which were sequels to serials shown in previous years, were explicitly political since they dealt respectively with an Egyptian spy successfully planted in Israel and the lives over many decades of rich and poor in a quarter of Cairo. Yet further analysis of the sorts of politics presented in these two serials is required. What is the meaning of the simple politics of identity promoted by "Ra'fat al-Haggan"? The opening scene in which the hero lies on his deathbed sets the terms. He announces, "I'm not a Jew, I'm a Muslim. I'm not an Israeli, I'm an Egyptian." All that matters is that he is an Egyptian. His cleverness in outwitting the Israelis and the triumph of the Egyptian Intelligence Service is meant to inspire national pride.



Hazem of Mayo weekly

Fig. 2: Source: *Egyptian Gazette*, May, 1990

Other kinds of politics besides this general love of country are noticeably absent.

"Hilmiyya Nights," the second important serial of the year, presents a more complex political picture, in part because it is historical. It provoked a lively debate in the magazines and the newspapers, mostly focused on its pro-Nasserist representation of the past. The story, in three parts already, and the debate it has generated, require careful study to determine the nature of the messages being broadcast about Egyptian politics and society.

The Audiences

The challenge for the anthropologist used to working in small homogeneous communities is how to go about studying something that reaches such a variety of people and communities and even how to define "the community" when it comes to national television. In considering the final important dimension of this study--the reception of TV serials--two aspects must be distinguished: the role of television in social life, on the one hand, and people's responses to the "texts" as cultural formations, on the other.

In this brief report I will not discuss the social role of television in Egyptian life but rather focus on the way the messages of these programs are received. The situations of those watching the same serial can be extremely varied and their interpretations vary accordingly. For example, Awlad 'Ali Bedouins had a surprising reading of the popular soap opera shown during Ramadan about the Egyptian spy in Israel. This national hero, they explained, was actually a Bedouin from Sinai. His quick wits and ability to do what he did they attributed to his Arab--as opposed to Egyptian--origins.

Another example comes from Upper Egypt. In a village in Upper Egypt the kind of gap that can exist between the producers' messages and the lives into which these enter became clear when I watched a serial called "Love in a Diplomatic Pouch" with a poor family. The exhausted mother of the family was preparing dinner with the help of her sister who had been there all day to help bake bread and watch the children while their mother went off to get fodder for the animals. The family was miserable--between their illnesses (including the measles that had struck all four of the little girls), the three boys' end-of-year exams, the expenses and fatigue of a recent trip to a hospital in Assiut in search of a cure for the father's asthmatic cough, and the government's announcement the previous day that the price of flour was to be doubled--they did not know how they would cope. Yet the serial they watched had such characters as a ballet teacher in the latest fashions, a woman doctor, and journalists and radio personalities with career problems. It centered on the lives of the members of a wealthy diplomat's family. The peasant women summarized the plot. From their reactions one could tell that they had indeed picked up the moral message of the serial about women and family--the importance of the mother's role in raising her children and the ill consequences for their children of mothers who abandon



Fig. 1: From the serial, "Ra'fat al-Haggan." "When I grow up I'm going to work as a spy so the girls in Israel will fall madly in love with me ...". Source: *Al-Ahram* April 21, 1990, p.11

them or put themselves or their marriages or careers first. They focused on the family dynamics that are the regular stuff of their own forms of telling life stories in the village.

But many of the "women's issues" in this serial were constructed in psycho-social terms that were of no interest to these women: "psychological" problems that love could heal, psychosomatic paralysis, men unable to commit themselves to marry for fear of losing their freedom, mothers who want their children to be emotionally open with them, and psychiatrists dealing with drug addiction among the wealthy and educated. These were neither part of these village women's experience nor reacted to in their discussions. And I suspect that it was this foreignness that made this a serial of which people were not especially fond. Everywhere I watched it, some ignored the television set altogether while others wandered in and out of the room.

The differences in reception are not just those of rural ignorance versus urban sophistication, however. For example, although everyone I spoke to in one village knew that the serial called "Forgiveness," based on a story by Tharwat 'Abaza, was loosely modeled on the story of Joseph in the Qur'an (and schoolchildren were expected to discuss the serial in the classroom each morning), some pious women in Cairo did not recognize the story.

The articulation of texts and responses in the case of the "ordinary" serials--mostly family or social dramas--are complex. Even more interesting are responses to the higher quality serials that treat larger social or political issues and are watched by nearly everyone in the country. These serials, often aired during the month of Ramadan, provoke cultural debates and are the subject of interviews, public discussion groups, articles and cartoons in the press.

Two good examples from the period of my research were "The White Flag" and "Hilmiyya Nights," both mentioned above and written by Usama Anwar 'Ukasha. These serials inspired much debate in the press about Egyptian politics and history. The press, representing differing political tendencies, was concerned with evaluating the messages conveyed in these serials about Nasserism and the social and economic consequences of Sadat's open-door policy. As one newspaper headline put it: "Does a writer have the right to interpret history?"

Ordinary people reacted differently to these programs, however. They were often impressed by the actors and actresses who starred in the serials. Furthermore, the gap between the intentions of the director and the responses of these audiences was apparent at least in the case of "The White Flag." Although the serial was a comment on the corrupt nouveau riche class, promoted the value of culture and artistic taste, and pointed out the problem of the destruction of that which is beautiful for profit, is this the message people received? Or did things backfire? There is no doubt that the outrageous villainess, the de-

termined Hagga Fadha, stole the show completely. Most people referred to the serial by her name rather than its proper title. Furthermore, I do not think I was alone in seeing the protagonist, the embattled diplomat and his young friends the blocked artist and earnest journalist, as pretentious and a bit dull—even if they were in the right.

And ultimately, one must remember, more viewers could identify with the loveable thug's bellydancing to loud music coming from a huge cassette player than could appreciate how precious was the diplomat's Chinese Ming vase balanced on his head. And surely people struggling with the housing crisis in Egypt's cities where apartments are unavailable or unaffordable or in Egypt's villages where it is forbidden to build on agricultural land must ask themselves why one *should* save a large villa in Alexandria for the use of one man and his two servants rather than put up apartments. The lesson is that with a broad audience, one will have multiple responses to the texts presented, determined by the circumstances of their lives and these various responses must be studied.

RECENT WORK IN EGYPT

A REPORT FROM ZAHİ HAWASS

In conjunction with the visit of Fouad Sultan, the Egyptian Minister of Tourism, to the United States in December 1991, Dr. Zahi Hawass reviewed the state of archaeological work and excavations in Egypt under the aegis of the Egyptian Antiquities Organization during the last two years. His report, which was sent to ARCE, contains the following information:

Museum Developments

President Hosni Mubarak will open in late December a new wing of the Luxor Museum that will house the statues uncovered in the Luxor Temple last year. One of the statues is of Amenhotep III, the most famous king of the 18th Dynasty (*ca* 1386-*ca* 1349 B.C.) and is said by some to be a masterpiece of sculpture. Other statues found in this cache portray Kings Horemheb and Tutankhamun, and other gods and goddesses.

In addition, the Mummy Room at Cairo Museum will be opened to the public in March, 1992. The renovated room will contain about twenty-seven royal mummies, including those of Ramses II, Tuthmosis III, Ramses III, Merenptah and Seknenra. The Mummy Room has been closed for fifteen years. Since that time the E.A.O., in cooperation with Getty Conservation Institute in Califor-

nia, designed a case with very sophisticated equipment to preserve the royal mummies in good condition.

On the Giza Plateau

In the last few years, E.A.O. excavators on the Giza Plateau have uncovered over one hundred tombs in the area about one km. southeast of the Great Sphinx. The layout of the tombs and the inscriptions indicate convincingly that these are tombs of the pyramid builders.

On many of the painted inscribed false doors excavators have found titles that link the tombs to inspectors of building and directors of tomb building.

The tombs were evidently built of material left after the construction of the pyramids and temples associated with the worship of the pharaohs; many of them have vaulted ceilings.

Ten tombs were found with a pyramidal shape and one that was stepped; these are indications that workers imitated royal pyramid building.

It is known that the Goddess Hathor was the protector of the workers. Many inscribed stelae have been found to contain the name of the goddess. The titles of most of the ladies were of priestesses of Hathor.

Excavators also found several beautiful statues in this cemetery. One remarkable one portrays a female servant who is grinding grain while kneeling.

Among the other interesting finds was a skeleton that bore signs of cancer in his skull; it would seem he had died following an operation to remove the cancer.

In addition to the tombs evidence has been found of two workers villages. One village was the permanent home for the artisans who decorated the tombs and cut the stone used in building the pyramids; and the other was a temporary village for the workers who moved the stones to the pyramid base.

During work on the sewage system in the modern village of Nazlet el-Saman, located at the foot of the Pyramid of Khufu, the remains of an Old Kingdom city were found that extended about three km. square. Much is known about tombs, temples and pyramids but very little is known about how the ancient Egyptians lived. The important yields from this dig include: remains of mudbrick houses and limestone walls, thousands of pottery sherds of beer and wine cups, trays for food, and storage vessels. In addition, excavators found bones belonging to such animals as pigs, cows and sheep, with butcher marks. Remains of pollen were also found. When an analysis of it is completed, light will be shed on the types of plants that grew in ancient Egypt, as well as on the climate 4600 years ago.

In the Giza Plateau area west of the Great Pyramid an important tomb of a dwarf was found close to that of another dwarf known as Seneb. This area--in which were buried dwarves and the handicapped people--was used by both Reisner and Junker as a place for disposing of excavation debris. The newly found tomb is of rectangular shape and built of limestone. It contains two false doors located on the east side of the tomb. On their drums the name of the dwarf is written in hieroglyphs Pr-ny- Ankhw. Statues of two females were found in the niches beside the false doors.

Attached to the tomb on its northern side is a serdad with a ceiling made out of a single limestone slab. A niche is located on the western side of the serdad under the overhang of the limestone ceiling.

Inside the serdad was found a black basalt statue of a dwarf. It is of superb craftsmanship, in the style consistent with private sculpture of the Old Kingdom but beautifully modeled. The fine chiseling of each facial feature and the carving of the muscular chest and arms and especially the remarkable details of the dwarf's deformities and injuries prove that the sculptor of Pr-ny-anhkw was acquainted with human anatomy and its proportions.

Inscriptions on the dwarf's right leg read: "One who delights his Lord every day, the King's dwarf Pr-ny-anhkw of the great palace." The leg shows that the dwarf suffered from elephantitis and is the first case of this disease that is known.

The Causeway and the Valley Temple of Khufu have been hidden for many years under the modern village of Nazlet-el- Saman. Although Herodotus, the father of history, identified the Causeway during his visit to the

Pyramids in 450 B.C., no other ancient scholars have mentioned the existence of either.

However, during the course of recent work on the sewage system of the village the route of the Causeway was found. The length of the Causeway was 825m and it changes its angle twice, once at the area of the Funerary Temple and again after 700m it turns 32 degrees. The Causeway was built of Tura limestone.

The Valley Temple was found at the end of the Causeway route, its base built of basalt, covered with limestone. Its length is about 70m, but the width of it cannot be determined because a modern villa sits on top of the site.

East of the Great Pyramid of Khufu work is underway in order to make the archaeological features in this area more available to the public.

The asphalt road has been removed and a boat pit was discovered under the road. The three Queens' Pyramids are under restoration. The Tombs of the Nobles will be opened to visitors. Other archaeological points of interest that will be worked on are: Hetep-heres, Khufu mother's shaft, the trial passage that was used as a model for building the Great Pyramid and the Funerary Temple of Khufu.

Fifteen tombs, some with vaulted ceilings, were opened recently at Giza; they are located east and west of the Great Pyramid of Khufu. Tombs of the Nobles and officials of the Old Kingdom have also been opened to the public.

The Sakkara Region and South

Outside the Giza Plateau area, a large mastaba in Luxor with a pyramid shape was found, its height was 10m and it is about 100m square. This tomb was for the high priest of Amon and is located at Draa Abou-el-Naga.

In addition, three new tombs of Nobles have been opened on the West Bank of Luxor.

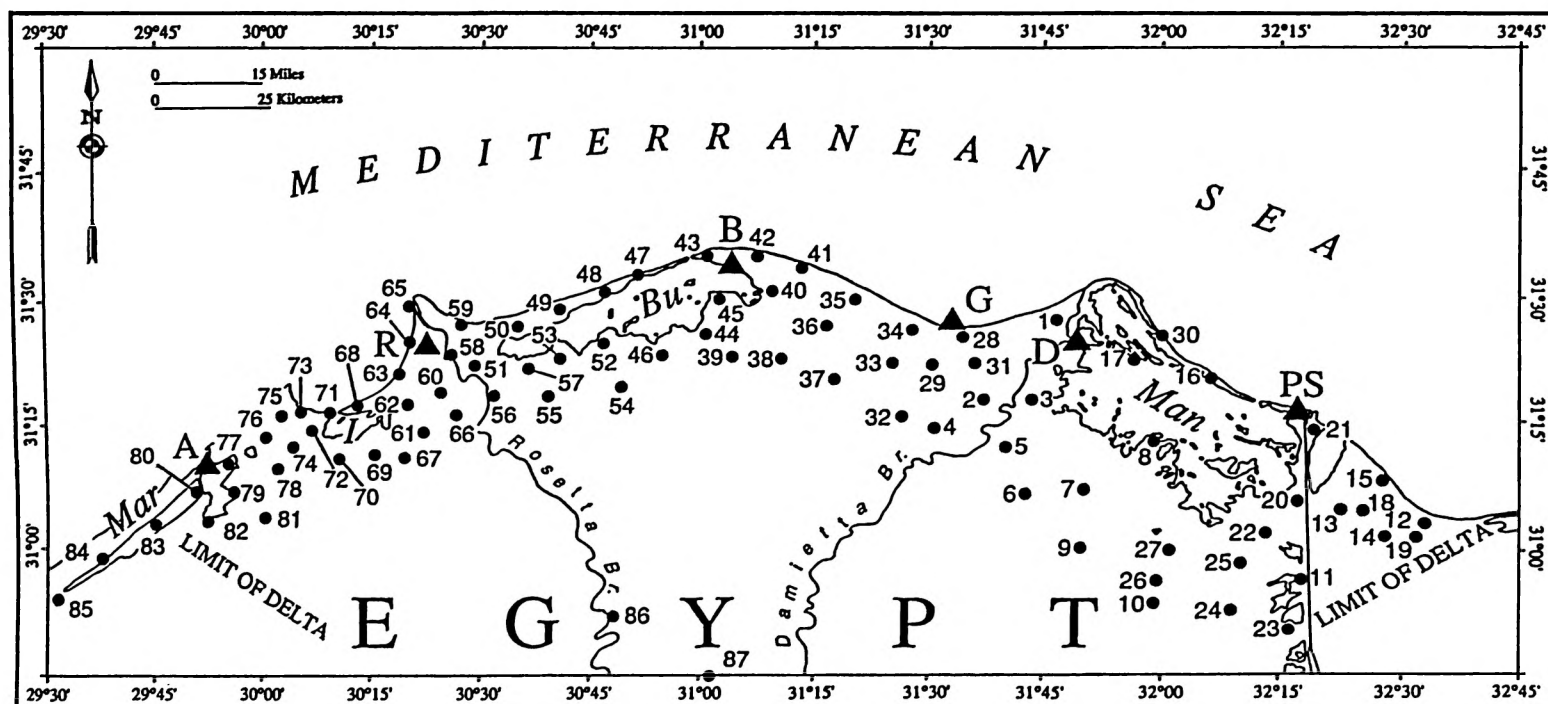
About thirty miles south of Helwan a large cemetery of Hathor was found. The tombs were built of limestone with vaulted ceilings. Inside each tomb was found a huge sarcophagus, each inscribed and painted. These inscriptions date back about 2500 years. Also discovered in the tombs were statues of Isis, Osiris, Horus and Ptah. It is the first time representations of all these gods have been found in one area.

At Sakkara, in a location south of the pyramid of King Pepi I, the second king of Dynasty VI, pyramids belonging to four queens were found. Each pyramid is 20-30m high. Two names of previously unknown queens have been found for the first time.

In addition, three tombs in the Sakkara precinct have been opened for the first time. The first is known as the Tomb of the Brothers: it is a twin mastaba. The second is known as the Butchers Tomb and the third the Birds Tomb.

MEDITERRANEAN BASIN (MEDIBA) PROGRAM

The Nile Delta and Global Change (January 1991 Update)



Map showing the location of 87 long continuous sediment cores collected in the northern Nile Delta of Egypt during the period 1985 to 1990. Not shown are the numerous short-cores and surficial grab samples available for the Manzala Lagoon, River Nile, and the environments of the delta. A=Alexandria; R=Rosetta; B=Baltim; D=Damietta; PS=Port Said. Lagoons: Mar=Mariut; I=Idku; Bu=Burullus; Man=Manzala.

Editor's Note: This report originally appeared in International Union for Quaternary Research, Newsletter No. 13, (May 1991), pg 71-73, and because of its interest to members, we have been given permission by Dr. Daniel J. Stanley to reprint it.

Goals

The Nile Delta Project, a multi-disciplinary and international program, was initiated at the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History in 1985 to measure changes that are seriously affecting the Nile Delta of Egypt. The delta is Egypt's major agricultural region and breadbasket for its rapidly growing population, now believed to exceed 55 million. Major ecological changes affecting the delta have been induced by both nature and man, i.e. in particular, closure of the High Dam at Aswan in 1964, continued development of a dense irrigation channel network across the delta plain, and land reclamation projects. Some serious complications have been created by the cut-off of sediment and nutrients by the dam, and by new irrigation projects. Of note are the loss of fisheries seaward of the delta, accelerated rapid erosion of the coastline, extensive salt incursion and diminished agricultural production. To date, the Nile Delta-Global Change Project has focused on detailing the sedimentological evolution of the northern delta during the past 10,000 years. In addition to man-induced changes during this

time span, there have been major consequences due to sea-level rise, land subsidence and neotectonics and paleoclimatic oscillations. Our goal is to establish detailed baselines to quantify these natural and man-induced factors that are affecting the delta. The idea behind the Project -- simply put -- is that we cannot hope to understand present changes or anticipate future modifications unless we comprehend both natural and human factors that have affected this region during the recent past, i.e. prior to the emplacement of the dams at Aswan. The ecologic problems are complex, requiring the urgent effort of various scientific disciplines, including geology (primarily sedimentology, paleontology, geochemistry), remote sensing, physical geography, invertebrate zoology and botany, and archaeology. A growing number of scientists in these fields were selected from various organizations in different countries and are now part of the research team. The study is being coordinated with counterpart Egyptian scientists such that effective steps can be taken to protect the most vital sectors of the Nile Delta.

Current Activities

Since 1985, our main objective has been to obtain complete stratigraphic/sedimentary sections across the northern Nile Delta by drilling long, continuous cores.

During five expeditions (1985, 1987, 1988, 1989, 1990) 87 cores have been recovered, and these constitute the world's most comprehensive collection of Nile Delta core materials. Cores range in length from 15 to 60 meters and include sections dating from about 35,000 years before present to the Recent. Over 2000 mineralogical, geochemical, and microfossil analyses, plus about 300 radiocarbon dates have been made, so that we are now able to determine rates of sedimentation and map areas of former (pre-Aswan) seaward delta growth and recent delta coastal erosion. Discoveries of very serious consequence are that the Nile Delta appears to be subsiding much faster than earlier estimated, and is tilting toward the northeast. The encroachment of the sea on the low-lying delta plain is expected to reach about 30 kilometers landward from the present coast in about one century. This extremely rapid subsidence will entrain further loss of fertile land due to the landward incursions of saline groundwater.

The research program is already constructive by helping Egypt determine what specific areas could best be protected from natural events, including sea-level rise. In the first six years of the Project, 20 papers have been published in scientific journals (SCIENCE, NATURE, etc.), four M.Sc theses have been completed, and extensive coverage of our results has been made available to the public through the media.

Participants:

The project's principle investigator is: Dr. Daniel J. Stanley, Senior Scientist Department of Paleobiology/Sedimentology.

The associated investigators are:

From the Smithsonian

Dr. H. Chen, NMNH-Paleobiology (sedimentology)

Dr. A. Warne, NMNH-Paleobiology (sedimentology)

Dr. G. Randazzo, NMNH-Paleobiology
(sedimentology)

Mr. S. Miller, NMNH-Sedimentology (petrology)

from George Washington University

Dr. F. Siegel, Dept. Geology and graduate students

from the Goddard Space Flight Center

Dr. P.T. Taylor (remote sensing); Dr. H.W. Blodget
(remote sensing);

from Ain Shams University

Dr. A. Bassiouni, Dept. Geology (ostracods)

Dr. M. Abu-Zeid, Dept. Geology (clay; mineralogy)

Dr. Shams El Din, Dept. Geology (clay; mineralogy)

Dr. F.H. Hanza, Dept. Geology (petrology)

from Cairo University

Dr. H. Hamroush, Dept. Geology (geochemistry)

from The Johns Hopkins University

Dr. H. Goedicke, Dept. Near Eastern Studies
(Egyptology)

from Museum d'Histoire Naturelle, Paris

Dr. A. Foucault, Geology Department
(global climate change)

from Univ. Cosenza, Italy

Dr. M.P. Bernascone (macrofauna)

from Univ. Trieste, Italy

Dr. N. Pugliese (shelf fauna)

from Mansoura Univ., Egypt

Dr. S. Ayad, Dept. Botany (pollen)

Others in U.S. and Europe

bryozoans, molluscs, phytoliths, etc.

For further information, contact Dr. Stanley at:
Room E-207, Smithsonian National Museum of Natural
History; phone: (202) 357-2310; FAX: (202) 786-2832

Project Report:

WESTERN VALLEY OF THE KINGS PROJECT

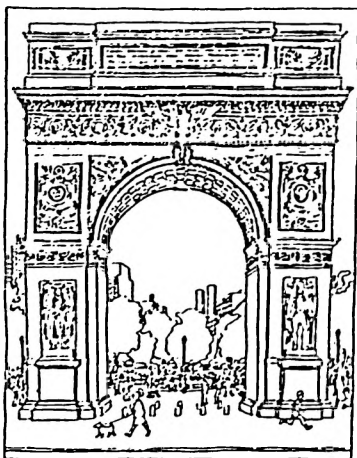
OTTO J. SCHADEN

Editor's Note: Dr. Schaden is head of the Western Valley of the Kings Project. An extended version of this report has been published in the Fall 1991 issue of KMT magazine.

From June 26 through July 10 the University of Arizona Egypt Expedition worked on the Dynasty XVIII single-chambered pit tomb, WV-24, in the Western Valley of the Kings. Though roughly a month was set aside for the task, unexpected delays reduced our digging time considerably. As a result, we managed to clear only the shaft and a little more than half of the burial chamber. The remainder will have to await the next season.

Finds were primarily fragmentary and consisted of parts of five bodies (mainly bones), tattered mummy wrappings, some coffin fragments and sherds. The area has been much disturbed and the materials from various periods were quite jumbled. The only intact find was a wooden workman's mallet, found under a small heap of very clean white limestone chips in a corner of the burial chamber. The most intriguing items uncovered were some glass fragments from what must have been costly inlaid articles and fine jewelry. As the only evidence of burials points to the late period (Dyn. XXI), these glass fragments may be intrusive.

The staff consisted of Otto Schaden (*mudir*), Richard Wilkinson of the University of Arizona (associate director), and Robert Wickland.



THE NEWS FROM NEW YORK

New Life Members

A. Bruce Mainwaring of Phoenixville, PA joined as a Life Member in the summer. Mr. Mainwaring is chairman of the Board of Overseers of the University Museum, University of Pennsylvania, and has a long-abiding interest in the archaeology of Egypt. Currently he is working with the Yale University/University of Pennsylvania Joint Expedition to Abydos.

Consortium News

We are happy to welcome Washington University into the consortium of the ARCE. In the last few years, the university, which is located in St. Louis, is one of the few to develop a new program in Middle East and Islamic studies. The director is Cornell Fleischer, who has carried out research in Egypt and is familiar with the work of ARCE. We are grateful to Dr. Fleischer for persuading the University to join the ARCE consortium.

The 43rd Annual Meeting: Seattle in 1992

Since it was last announced in the Newsletter, there is a change in the Conference Hotel for the 43rd annual meeting: our new hotel host is the Seattle Hilton (Downtown), 1301 6th Avenue, Seattle, WA 98101. For reservations (outside Washington State) call 1-800-426-0535 for bookings; (within Washington State), call 1-800-542-7700. Identify yourself as part of the "American Research Center in Egypt Conference." The conference rates: \$70 per room, double or single occupancy plus 14.2% tax.

There are special rates for student accommodations at the hotel (call Travel Express below for further details), and Dr. Jere Bacharach, the chairperson of Local Arrangements, is also arranging for student accommodations at the University of Washington. For further information, contact Dr. Bacharach at (206) 548-4967. Forms will be available at the time of the preliminary program mailing in February.

For Airline Travel Arrangements: Travel Express of Seattle has been designated to handle the travel arrangements for the meeting. Special group airfares will be arranged to and from your home city, allowing for early arrival and/or late departures from Seattle.

Travel Express has planned several excursions available for those who wish to explore the Seattle region, including cruises to Victoria/Vancouver, British Columbia, or shorter day-cruises in the waters around Seattle. For further information and to make your reservations call toll free 1-800-451-8097 and ask for Delaire Dhillon or identify yourself as part of the ARCE group.

The International Congress of Egyptologists: Turin, 1991

The Sixth International Congress of Egyptologists took place in Turin, September 1-8, 1991. Sixteen hundred people signed up to listen to some 370 scheduled papers in all fields of research (not all of which were delivered). Zahi Hawass stirred interest by reporting excavations on the Giza Plateau, including the area close to the workers' city which disclosed a cemetery with a hundred small tombs shaped as little pyramids. In general, there was no shattering new research presented in the papers.

The opening ceremonial session, held in the Royal Theater, was an occasion for pomp and circumstance: a short concert of European chamber music commenced a series of welcoming speeches by officials of the ICE, the Turin government, and the Egyptian Antiquities Organization. In his address, Dr. Mohamed Ibrahim Bakr spoke of conservation needs and identified those Egyptian monuments in particular need of conservation and restoration.

The speakers were flanked by colorfully dressed carabinieri and by statuesque young Italian women serving as go-betweens. The dais was covered in flowers.

As usual, the congress provided an opportunity for many Egyptologists from all over the world to exchange news and information with colleagues of distant lands and places and for many European students to become acquainted with the established names in the field. The organization of the panels provided for plenary sessions in the morning, which could be heard by all, and then a choice of ten panels in the afternoon. There were reports from the directors of the Egyptian Antiquities Organization, the French Institute of Oriental Archaeology, and the German Archaeological Institute on work since the last international congress three years ago. Work by American archaeologists was not given space on the program.

The social highlight of the gathering was a banquet for 1600 guests in the courtyard of the Palazzo Reale in Turin. The Italian hosts had prepared a sumptuous feast.

Another highlight for ARCE members attending the conference was a dinner organized by Noel Switzer, president of the Southern California chapter, in honor of the Egyptian delegation headed by Dr. Mohamed I. Bakr. A convivial evening ensued at a Spanish restaurant in the heart of the city.

Many participants took the occasion to visit the famous collection of the Egyptian Museum of Turin, several of whose galleries had been recently renovated.

The outgoing president of the International Association of Egyptology, the organizing bureau of the congress, is Prof. William Kelly Simpson, who, in his final address

to the members, noted the sweep of research that has occurred during the nine years of his presidency. The incoming president is Dietrich Wildung; the Vice President is Faiza Haikal. During the final session, a special medal was given to Gamal Mokhtar, former chairman of the Egyptian Antiquities Organization. Other recipients of awards were Prof. Simpson, Mohamed Ibrahim Bakr (current chairman of the EAO), Erik Hornung, and Prof. Jean LeClant.

Pending further study, the 7th congress may be held in London or Cambridge. Alternatively, it may be convened in Cairo.

Report supplied by Terry Walz

New York Lecture Series

January 1992: Muhammad Ibrahim Bakr, Chairman, Egyptian Antiquities Organization, "RECENT EXCAVATIONS IN THE DELTA"; February 13, Catharine Roehrig, Assistant Curator, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, "PORTRAYALS OF ROYAL NURSES IN THE 18TH DYNASTY"; March 9, Lanny Bell, Oriental Institute, University of Chicago, "IN THE TOMBS OF THE HIGH PRIESTS OF AMUN- RA OF KARNAK AND THE VICEROYS OF KUSH IN THE TIME OF RAMESSES II" (co-sponsored by the New York Society of the Archaeological Institute of America); April 2, Steven E. Sidebotham, History Department, University of Delaware, "ROME'S SPICE TRADE WITH THE EAST: THE EGYPTIAN CONNECTION"; May 14, ARCE ANNUAL LECTURE, Dieter Arnold, Curator, Department of Egyptian Art, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, "THE ART OF BUILDING IN ANCIENT EGYPT."

Check the New York office for latest information and details (212) 998-8890.

Museum Update

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts has just renovated its Ancient Art galleries and the Museum has provided this report. On view again after more than five years will be objects that have undergone extensive cleaning and conservation as well as many pieces being shown at the Museum for the first time—new gift, purchases and important loans from the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the J. Paul Getty Museum and private collectors.

The new installation in the renovated Classical Court and the enlarged Mary Morton Parsons Gallery will feature the arts of ancient Egypt, Greece, Italy and the Near East, produced from the 4th millennium BC to the 4th century AD.

Dr. Margaret Ellen Mayo, the Museum's curator of ancient art, says the redesigned Classical Court "now acts as a crossroads for the galleries of Asian and ancient art that lead off from it....The new installation treats the collection as a cohesive unit so that the objects can be seen to their best advantage and in the context of the various ancient cultures they represent."

In the expanded Parsons Gallery, more than 400 objects from the Museum's Egyptian, Greek, Etruscan and Roman collections are presented with a focus on such topics as Egyptian writing, ancient portraiture and mythology.

The Egyptian mummy mask pictured below from the



Photo 1: Mummy Mask, 305-30 BC. 51x26-1/2x10", painted gesso over wood, Egyptian Ptolemaic Period. From the Ancient Art Galleries, Virginia Museum of Fine Arts.

Ptolemaic Period, given to the museum in 1969 but never seen before because it needed conservation, will also be displayed.

The Department of Egyptian and Ancient Near Eastern Art of the *Museum of Fine Arts in Boston* announces that on May 9, 1992, *Nubia: An Ancient African Civilization* exhibition goes on view in a new gallery dedicated to the art and culture of ancient Nubia on the first floor. The Museum's Nubian collection spans six thousand years and ranges from intricate gold jewelry to carved sandstone reliefs and monumental sculpture, from bows and arrows to the burial treasures of kings and queens. Nowhere else but in the Sudan National Museum in Khartoum can such a comprehensive array of objects from this original and accomplished ancient African civilization be viewed. The Nubian collection exists in Boston because of the pioneering archaeological work of the Museum's early curator of Egyptian art, George A. Reisner, whose excavations also yielded much of the Egyptian collection. Under Reisner's direction, the joint Harvard University-Museum of Fine Arts Expedition excavated in Nubia between 1905 and 1930. The discoveries of the Boston expedition would not only form the basis of the museum collection in Khartoum and Boston, but also lay the foundation of our understanding of the ancient history of Nubia. According to the Museum press release, in 1981, Timothy Kendall, associate curator in the Department of Egyptian and Ancient Near Eastern Art, organized an exhibition of Nubian material for the Brockton Art Museum; in the preface to the catalogue, he called for a gallery at the Museum of Fine Arts devoted solely to Nubian objects, in which this civilization could be considered as a whole and on its own merits. Giving this outstanding collection permanent exhibition, for the benefit of both scholars and museum visitors, became an important goal for the Museum.

After a long closure, due to major renovations, the *Royal Ontario Museum* (ROM) will open its new Ancient Egypt and Nubia Galleries on the 23rd of January 1992.

As described in the ROM's announcement, the Egyptian Gallery is organized in three main sections: chronology, daily life and religion. The Nubia Gallery is arranged chronologically with an alcove featuring material from Dr. N.B. Millet's excavation at Gebel Adda 1963-66.

Several exciting elements have been included which will give the galleries a high-tech blush. A 3-D graphic video program will demonstrate the building of a pyramid, while another interactive video station will teach rudimentary hieroglyphs. Visitors can relax in front of the fondly-remembered Punt Wall while an audio program built into the seating will relate the narrative aspects of the reliefs.

All of the Egyptian Department's finest objects will be displayed, most of which will be a welcome return after some 12 years in storage. The Gebel Adda objects (some 250 or so) have never been on display; they will provide new grist for study and appreciation of Nile Valley civilization.

Exhibitions

The University Art Gallery at California State University, San Bernardino, The San Bernardino County

Museum, the Fine Arts Commission of the City of San Bernardino and the Harer Family Trust have come together to produce an exhibition of enormous strength and beauty. "Temple, Tomb and Dwelling: Egyptian Antiquities from the Harer Family Trust Collection" will be on exhibit from January 8, 1992 through March 1, 1992. Approximately 120 objects will be displayed in the University Art Gallery. Simultaneously, The San Bernardino County Museum will display approximately 170 objects, completing the display of one of the most important, privately held collections of Egyptian antiquities in the United States today. The Harer Family Trust collection is unique in that it reflects the vocation of the principal collector, Dr. W. Benson Harer, an ARCE Executive Committee Member and medical doctor, and his passion for antiquities as they relate to ancient medicine. This exhibit presents the most important collection of Egyptian antiquities to be displayed in the greater Los Angeles area since the King Tutankhamun exhibition was shown in 1976. The cover photograph of this issue of the Newsletter shows one object from the Harer Family Trust collection.

Yousri Younan:

ARCE 1991 Conservator in Residence

The second year of the innovative "Conservator-in-Residence Program" that ARCE supervises brought Yousri Younan to the United States on a three-month fellowship as guest of the Conservation Department of The Brooklyn Museum. Yousri, an objects conservator for the Egyptian Antiquities Organization, is attached to the Egyptian Museum conservation department. Like many conservators in the EAO, he works on a variety of different kinds of objects, including pots, metals, and paintings (mostly Coptic icons), but at The Brooklyn Museum he was asked to tend a group of prehistoric pots that need consolidation and stabilization. His supervisor at the Department was Ellen Pearlstein, who had visited Egypt and been attached at least one season as the conservator of the Mut Expedition under the direction of Richard Fazzini, chairman of the Department of Egyptian, Classical, and Ancient Middle Eastern Art.

Yousri fit into the museum and life in New York with professionalism and the greatest of ease, winning friends both in and outside the museum. He worked full-time on the predynastic pots, stabilizing 18 of them by the time he left, and was also asked to work on some metal objects that were suffering from "bronze disease." Outside Brooklyn, he visited conservation departments at the University Museum, University of Pennsylvania; the Conservation Analytical Laboratory at the Smithsonian Institution; the Metropolitan Museum of Art; the Conservation Center at the Institute of Fine Arts, Boston, and the Fogg Art Museum.

Passing the summer in New York, he was inevitably introduced to American Fourth of July celebrations and was invited to spend the day at the home of Jim and Susan Allen in the Connecticut countryside. He took an immediate liking to the traditional barbecue and willingly en-



Photo 2: Yousri Younan on top of the World Trade Center, Summer 1991.

gaged in a sharp game of croquet played out on the Allens' backyard lawn.

Ms. Pearlstein wrote Dr. Bakr, chairman of the Egyptian Antiquities Organization, after he completed the program: "Yousri contributed his excellent hard work to the Museum's collection and his ready smile to the Museum's staff. I consider his stay with us an enormous success and will miss him."

The Conservator-in-Residence Program is funded through a grant from the United State Information Agency. We are grateful to the Agency for continuing its support of this worthy program.

People in the News

More on the Sphinx

This story has certainly received endless press in this country, one of the most recent being Alan Cowell's article in *The New York Times* July 11. Zahi Hawass is again quoted at length on the condition of the monument, particularly the head, and the conservation work that the EAO has done on it. Cowell also quoted Rainer Stadelmann, director of the German Archaeological Institute, who said, "The head of the Sphinx will not fall down. It is in a much better condition than most people think."

In a separate piece written for *Travel and Leisure Magazine* in August, Cowell also mentions the problems with the Luxor Temple (but not new), the need for a new museum to replace the antiquated Egyptian Museum in Cairo, and other environmentally caused pollutions.

More on the Pyramids

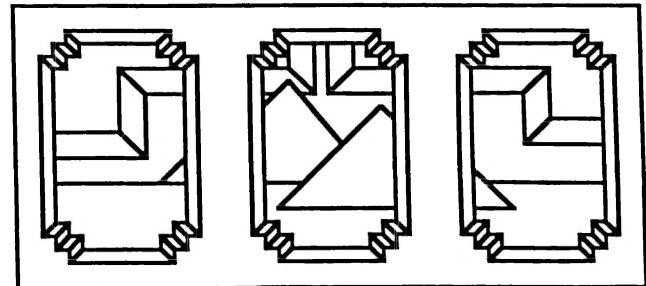
Yes, the Pyramids have also been on the endangered list as well, according to a feature article in the August issue of *Traveler Magazine* written by John Anthony West. However, it was not their physical condition that was at risk, but the Pyramid "experience." According to the author, the ravenous tourist industry and the spillover from Cairo's outskirts had severely diminished the "quality" of

the Pyramid experience. Recent corrective measures by the EAO in removing vendors from the plateau as well as touts and camels have helped to create "a miraculously peaceful and orderly environment. [Yet] the urban sprawl near the Pyramids has continued."

Hamza El Din Update

For many ARCE members interested in the cultural life of modern Egypt, Hamza El Din is much appreciated and loved for his mastery of the oud and haunting melodies. Hamza is Nubian and his music is distinctly Nubian, but in the 1960s and 1970s he played with an extraordinary number of groups in Europe and the United States. He made numerous recordings, and with the Kronos Quartet of San Francisco, he recently rerecorded a composition for Western string instruments he wrote on a well-known Nubian song called "Escalay" ("waterwheel"). For the last ten years he has been living in Japan, where he has had the opportunity to play with masters of the Japanese lute, drum and bamboo flute. In an article in a recent *Aramco World*, he said, "The traditional music of Japan has taught me to compose and play my own work with more precision and concentration."

The Arts & Embassies Program, U.S. Department of State, has selected a painting of New York artist and ARCE member Adrienne Wortzel for exhibition at the American Embassy in Cairo. Ms. Wortzel's paintings evoke the state of architectural elements in antiquity when they were originally constructed. The painting will be exhibited beginning November 1991 and will continue for the tenure of the Ambassador.



Drawing of "Slow Boat Moving 5", a painting by Adrienne Wortzel currently on view at the American Embassy in Cairo

A Water Park in, Yes, Egypt

The New York Times informed us in August that the first American-style water park ever to be erected "in the Arab Middle East" is being built in the desert just north of the Pyramids on the Alexandria Road. This new monument, which is called "Crazy Water," is the California-inspired dream of Egyptian entrepreneurs and will require thousands of gallons of Nile water trucked in daily from Cairo. Entrance fees are £E10 for adults, less for children. The park was due to open in August. According to reports from some of our archaeological friends in Egypt, children love it!

The Gold Vulture Caper

Or, rather "the curse of the gold vulture" as an article in the *Boston Magazine* (August 1991) put it, is the story of an ancient Egyptian gold pectoral in the shape of a vulture, inlaid with carnelian and blue and purple glass, that is in the Egyptian collection of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Eleven years earlier, according to papers filed in the United States District Court in Boston, it was housed in a vault of the library of Lafayette College in Easton, Pennsylvania and had been lifted from the library and gone undetected until early 1990.

The college now seeks to have its ownership of the pectoral restored. The museum has refused on the grounds that it had purchased the item on good faith in 1980, at which time its sale had been widely publicized, and because it has restored the ornament and documented its provenance, it is much more valuable than it had been. A compromise solution will no doubt be worked out.

What makes the story especially intriguing is the fact that the theft may be linked to the murder of the librarian of Lafayette College.

All this certainly has the ingredients of a ripe mystery novel.

Ben Ezra Synagogue Project Nears Completion in Cairo

The Journal of Art, October 1991, informs us that the restoration of the oldest Jewish temple in Egypt (known as the "Ben Ezra Synagogue Restoration Project" or BESRP) was initiated by Phyllis Lambert, Director of the Canadian Center for Architecture (CCA), and began in 1981 under the auspices of the World Jewish Congress in Cairo and supervised by the Egyptian Antiquities Organization (EAO). BESRP grew from the desire to create a locus of ecumenical understanding following the Camp David Agreement. The structure will have been entirely re-rendered with its original acroteria and frieze panels remodeled. The roof has already been retiled with heat and water insulation and the fine wood and ironwork replaced. The panels and wall paintings are still under restoration. A photographic survey of the synagogue in 1960 uncovered in Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People in Jerusalem was used to conduct the work. Interruptions and delays during the reconstruction were inevitable. Highly saline ground water-which continues to rise posing a constant threat to most historical monuments in Cairo has seeped through the masonry, causing humidity and decay. The restoration project also includes a compilation of historical research in archaeological investigation that will soon be published. The restoration of the synagogue will be completed by the end of December 1991.

Recent Publications

The second volume of Martin Bernal's *Black Athena: The Afroasiatic Roots of Classical Civilization*, Volume Two: *The Archaeological and Documentary Evidence*, was just published by Rutgers University Press (paper:

Chapter News

Southern California

In June the chapter had the opportunity to hear Dr. Nathalie Beaux, research associate at the French Institute of Oriental Archeology in Cairo. Dr. Beaux lectured on "Ancient Egyptian Gardens."

On July 20, 1991 ARCE/SC held its third annual symposium in conjunction with the Museum of Natural History of the County of Los Angeles. The subject of the day-long symposium was *Ancient Egypt: The Pyramid Age*. The distinguished speakers were: Dr. E.C. Krupp, Director of the Griffith Observatory; Dr. Zahi Hawass, and Dr. Mark Lehner. The three scholars discussed the ongoing excavations and new concepts concerning the Pyramid Age.

In August, Husein Fahmy, the Egyptian film star, was asked to speak to the chapter on "The Middle East After the War and The Egyptian Cinema".

In October, Dr. Wolfhart Westendorf, recently retired professor of Egyptology at Goettingen University in Germany, will present a lecture on "Religious Texts: Their Symbolism in the Medicine of Ancient Egypt." Also scheduled for October 24th, Dr. Peter Der Manuelian, research associate with the Department of Egyptian and Near Eastern Art in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts. He will speak about "The Saite Renaissance-Its Thematic Ties to Old Kingdom Egypt"

On these events, contact Noel Sweitzer, president of the chapter, at (213) 231-1104.

Arizona

A full set of lectures for the fall season is planned, thanks to a grant the chapter received from the Arizona Humanities Council.

For further information these lectures and other chapter events, contact Richard Wilkinson, (602) 621-3933.

Washington

For further information, contact the president, John Sarr at (301) 656-8520.

South Texas

The annual tour of Egypt will be led by Charles Van Siclen from the 9th to the 23rd of February, 1992. For further information and news on chapter activities, call Polly Price, (512) 657-2428.

Orange County

Antonio Loprieno, University of California at Los Angeles, spoke on "Ancient Egyptian Literature," September 22.

For further information on upcoming events, contact Niko Theris, (714) 494-7443.

\$16.95). It was reviewed in The New York Times Book Review Section in 11 August 1991 by John Baines of the University of Oxford. In his review, Dr. Baines argues that in presenting the central cultural role of Egypt and black Africa as a corrective to Western Hegemony, the author, along with Cheikh Anta Diop, the Senegalese historian, "largely reject the idea of the separate evolution of civilizations, returning to the much criticized theory known as diffusionism. According to this view, there has been little independent invention of the components of civilization in different parts of the world; most civilizations owed their achievements to others." He accuses the two authors of overkill in this regard: "in order to attack the mistaken view that Africans were not autonomous and inventive, they imply that other cultures could not have been autonomous and inventive."

Dr. Baines also discusses Bernal's treatment of the ancient Egyptians' notion of people's color; Bernal's thesis on the alphabet; the question of invasions by the ancient Egyptians into Asia Minor as an explanation of their important cultural role in Greek civilization.

Krzysztof Grzmski of the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto wrote the text and supplied the photographs for an article in the July-August 1991 issue of *Aramco World* entitled "Sudan: The Land of Pyramids." In it he draws attention to the fact that the pyramids in the Sudan are so little known. He writes about the contributions of George Reisner, who recovered splendid buried treasures now in the museums in Boston and Khartoum and bear witness to the characteristic and economic development of the Kushitic kingdoms.

Notice: Erik Hornung's *The Tomb of Pharaoh Seti I*, the German/English edition published by Artemis and Winkler with Harry Burton's photographs from the 1920s, is available from Princeton Architecture Press, 1-800-458-1131 or write 37 East 7th Street, New York, NY 10003. Price \$150.

Garland Publishing Inc. is pleased to announce development of a four-volume series of encyclopedias entitled *Archaeology of the Ancient Near East*. Focus of the series will be on the material archaeological record of the area. Individual volumes will include *Archaeology of Ancient Egypt*, edited by Kathryn Bard; *Archaeology of Ancient Syria-Palestine*, edited by Suzanne Richard; *Archaeology of Ancient Anatolia*, edited by G. Kenneth Sams and *Archaeology of Ancient Mesopotamia Iran, and the Gulf*, edited by Anthony Green.

Upcoming Conferences and Symposia

The 20th International Congress of Papyrology sponsored by the Association Internationale de Papyrologues (A.I.P.), will take place at the University of Copenhagen on August 23-29, 1992. For further information contact: Adam Bulow-Jacobsen of the organizing committee, 20th International Congress of Papyrologists; A.I.P.; c/o Symposium International, Karlebogard, Karlebovej 91, DK-3400 Hillerod, Denmark.

BOOK NOTES

THE ELEMENTS OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONSERVATION

by J. M. Cronyn

Routledge, \$25 paper

From the blurb:

"What are the objectives and principles of archaeological conservation? Jancy Cronyn sets out, in a lucid and practical manner, to survey the current processes and technologies employed in conservation, to explore the nature of artifacts, their decay, and how they are examined and treated in the laboratory. A general preface to the subject introduces individual chapters investigating the agents of deterioration and preservation, techniques of conservation, siliceous and related materials, metals and organic materials. The concluding section offers a guide to relevant organizations, training facilities, and publications.

"Copiously illustrated with both photographs and line drawings, *The Elements of Archaeological Conservation* is a unique and valuable reference text for anyone training--or considering training--in conservation or archaeology, as well as for non-professionals such as excavators, finds specialists, archaeometrists, and museum curators.

"A freelance consultant, lecturer, and author in archaeological conservation, J. M. Cronyn is a Fellow of the International Institute for Conservation (FIIC), and taught the subject to archaeology undergraduates and to graduate conservators at the University of Durham for fourteen years."

Contents:

Introducing archaeological conservation: The processes of conservation; Archaeological conservation today; Conservation in practice: a collaborative exercise;

Agents of deterioration and preservation: Introduction; Archaeological environments; Immediate deterioration caused by excavation; Agents of long-term deterioration to excavated material; Summary;

General techniques of conservation: Retrieval of artifacts and associated information from a deposit; Marking and labelling artifacts; Examination and cleaning; Stabilization; Composite artifacts; Recording; New directions; Summary of the tasks of the non-specialist in conservation;

Siliceous and related materials: General; Stone; Cementing materials and their composites; Glass; Ceramics;

Metals: General; Iron and its alloys; Lead and its alloys; Tin and its alloys; Copper and its alloys; Silver and its alloys; Gold and its alloys;

Organic materials: General; Wood; Skin and gut products; Skeletal material (bony); Horn, tortoiseshell, and feathers; Fibers; Minerals of organic origin.

**EGYPT'S MAKING The Origins of Ancient Egypt
5000-2000 BC**
By Michael Rice
Routledge, 1990, 1991 \$29.95 cloth; paperback; \$14.95

From the jacket:

"Egypt is not one but many: the Egypt of the pyramids, of colossal statues, of strange animals and gods. It is a distant and alien place. But there is an Egypt that is more familiar, a world of common humanity, littered with children's toys and games, with cosmetics, ornaments, and jewels, that is busy with the everyday transactions of ordinary life. Like all succeeding generations the ancient Egyptians argued and played games, loved, worked, and engaged in labor disputes. And yet there is something unique about Egypt--and it is this quality which Michael Rice celebrates in this book.

"His concern is with what 'made' Ancient Egypt. To find out, he looks back into the earliest recorded period of Egypt's past, tracing the story through the Predynastic period and forward into the early Dynastic Period and the Old Kingdom. He considers Egypt in its broad context, as a land which attracted to it intrepid travelers and traders, bringing influences from far away into the Valley, from the distant shores of the Arabian Gulf and beyond. Egypt's was a culture of energy and dynamism, qualities not often apparent in dry museum presentations of Ancient Egypt.

"The underlying sense of Egypt's self is often overwhelmed by its supreme productivity, the cascade of artifacts which now swamp the collections of the world. On the basis of thirty years' experience of Egypt and the Middle East, Michael Rice goes beyond the artifacts themselves to explain their meaning, and to understand the lives of the kings, citizens, and craftsmen who were involved in their creation."

The author:

Michael Rice has spent much of his life researching the antiquity of the Near East. He has been involved with the creation of several museums there, and has traveled extensively in the Nile Valley over the past thirty years. He has written widely on the archaeology of Arabia and the Arabian Gulf.

A BIBLIOGRAPHY OF THE AMARNA PERIOD AND ITS AFTERMATH

The Reigns of Akhenaten, Senkhkare, Tutankhamun and Ay (c. 1350- 1321 bc)

By Geoffrey Thorndike Martin

Kegan Paul International, distributed by Routledge, Chapman & Hall Inc US\$55, Canada \$68.95, cloth

From the jacket:

"Few periods of Egyptian history have given rise to such interest and controversy as the reigns of the Amarna rulers, especially that of Akhenaten, the so-called Heretic

Pharaoh. This is particularly so in the present century, which has seen extensive excavations and research in the capital city of Akhenaten and Nefertiti at El-Amarna, in the royal necropolis there, and in the great Aten temple at Karnak.

"The religious upheavals and art of the Amarna period exert a continuing fascination, not only on professional Egyptologists, but also on a wider public. This interest has given rise to an enormous body of Amarna literature, to which there has been, until now, no current and all-embracing guide.

"Professor Martin recently discovered at Saqqara an important series of post-Amarna tombs including those of the general Horemheb (later the last pharaoh of the Eighteenth Dynasty) and the treasurer Maya, both of whom were officials of Tutankhamun. In this volume he provides a comprehensive bibliography of books, articles, dissertations and other material on the Amarna Period and its aftermath. This is an indispensable work of reference for all scholarly research in the field, as well as a welcome aid for laymen wishing to pursue an interest in Amarna studies."

The author:

Geoffrey Thorndike Martin, who has been concerned with research in the Amarna and post-Amarna Period for many years, received his PhD from Cambridge University. He has been involved in fieldwork in the Sudan and in Egypt since 1963, and since 1975 has been directing a joint expedition for the Egypt Exploration Society and Leiden Museum at Saqqara. He is currently Edwards Professor of Egyptology at University College London.

EGYPT: Moulids, Saints, Sufis

by Nicolaas H. Biegman

(first published in Dutch)

Kegan Paul International: London

Distributed by Routledge, Chapman and Hall, New York, 1990

175 pp., many color photos, \$49.50

This is an illustrated text of the popular religion as practiced by Egyptians, whether Muslim, Christian, or Jewish, as reflected in the festivals of saints and the lives of modern saints; a third section deals with the practice of mystical Islam. The author is a former ambassador of the Netherlands in Egypt who, in his spare time, enjoyed partaking in the moulids and observing the practice of modern faith. He reports that it is much livelier than one might think.

The first section on moulids (or birthday celebrations) picks up where McPherson's study of many years ago left off. Biegman was surprised and delighted by the liveliness of these festivals, and he found them everywhere and practiced by people of all faiths. One of the interesting observations he makes is that the popularity of some moulids waxes and wanes. The moulid of Ahmad al-

Rifa'i, once immensely popular in the late nineteenth century, then almost extinct in the 1940s, has become popular again. There are interesting comments on pharaonic remains, for instance, the use of boats and poles, in these festivals.

In the section on saints, Mr. Biegan concentrates on the modern saints, Muslim and Coptic, in particular Sghaikh Ahmad Radwan, who was recognized as a living saint before his death in 18967, and Pope Kyrillos Vi, the Coptic patriarch. He provides insight into the popular perception of saints, the cult of which is condemned by orthodox Islam.

The final section dwells on the practice of sufism. The author became particular friends with Shaikh Zahir of the Rifa'i order. They embraced him and put no impediments to his research. The photographs he was able to take are fascinating. This section ends with a small segment on zars.

In the epilogue, Mr. Biegan makes the following comment from the viewpoint of the Western scholar/observer:

"The surprise of Egypt was that within a ten minutes' walk, or at most a ten hours' drive from my home, there turned out to be scope for exploration in the vertical sense; in depth so to speak even though that depth was not very great: I only had to scratch the surface to find a world which, God knows why, hardly anybody had bothered with during the last half century. At first sight this looked like an incomprehensible and unpenetrable world, where poor people indulged in strange rituals and told one another tales that were even stranger. Gradually, however, I found great cordiality and openness, an impressive goodness, a rich tradition and an honest striving for the sublime. Both the sufis and the people around them proved to be hospitable and tolerant. I have never had to pose as a Muslim in order to be admitted anywhere. Taking photographs was hardly ever a problem. People were proud of their sheikhs and of themselves (p. 171)."

OUT OF EGYPT

Scenes and Arguments of an Autobiography
by Ihab Hassan

Southern Illinois University Press: Carbondale and
Edwardsville, 1986.

114 pp., \$16.00 cloth

Mr. Hassan is described in the blurb of this book as one of the world's leading critics of modern literature who immigrated to the United States from Egypt in 1946. He was given a grant to write a memoir of the formation of his consciousness (he refers to the "re-membering scraps of thought like the scattered bones of Osiris"), and this book is the product.

Working his way between past and present, but mostly past, Hassan provides an attractively personal and interesting biographical sketch of growing up in Egypt in the 30s and early 40s. This was an immensely interesting

time in Egypt's cultural history: the upper class embraced all forms of Western social and cultural ways while hanging on to their own. Hassan's family was well-to-do: his father was a provincial governor, but Hassan pleasingly does not emphasize this fact nor glorifies his leisured youth. There are progresses through the villages; bird hunting scenes; intriguing interludes with female members of the family; scenes of difficult adolescence in Saidiah Secondary School, and then young adulthood at Cairo University. His memory serves him well, and the book, though short, contains a number of vivid scenes and impressions. I was sorry, personally, when he emigrated to the U.S. and all that rich texture of life came to an end. However, Hassan was jubilant and found a useful life "out of Egypt."

Terry Walz

IN REMEMBRANCE

YOUSSEF IDRIS

Youssef Idris, one of the acknowledged masters of contemporary arabic literature, died in London 1 August 1991. A novelist, playwright, short-story writer, screen scriptwriter and a columnist, so noted Adel Darwish in *The Independent* (3 August 1991), he exercised a strong impact on public opinion, not just in Egypt but throughout the Middle East. He stirred controversy by writing about the poor and the lower classes in Egyptian society. He wrote about ordinary day-to-day characters crushed by the reality of modern life. His sympathies with the dispossessed led him to conflict with the Government of Gamal Adel Nasser, and he was jailed in 1954. His short stories and dramas were innovative, and contributed to the development of writing forms in Egypt. Throughout his life, he maintained a commitment to the principles of human rights, democracy and individual liberty, and his writings in the 1960s and 1970s were highly critical of Nasser's state capitalism.



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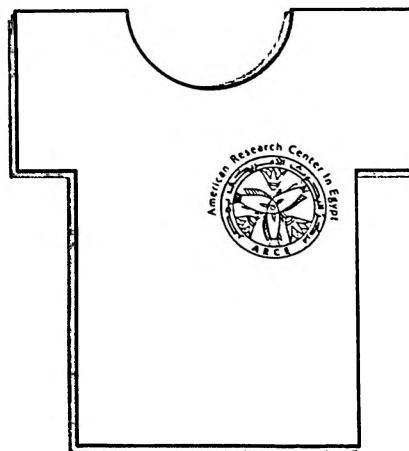
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